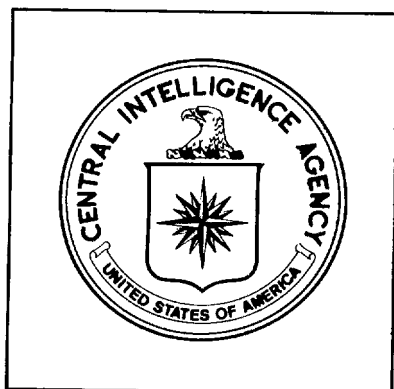


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The USSR

Supplement

REGIONAL AND POLITICAL ANALYSIS

25X1

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THE USSR
SUPPLEMENT
6 October 1977

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USSR-China: Growing Soviet Concern
Over Chinese Military Developments. 1

6 October 1977

USSR-China: Growing Soviet Concern Over Chinese Military Developments

25X1 [redacted] Soviet concern about China's strategic military capability is growing. The USSR has long credited Peking with a modest nuclear deterrent, but events of the past year appear to have increased Soviet apprehension, primarily about the long-term implications of China's activities. Soviet expressions of concern have become especially apparent since last spring.

A convergence of several recent events seems to have sparked this increased Soviet concern.

- The new Chinese leadership, without Mao and the radicals, is apparently opting for orderly economic growth (with its military implications) while maintaining China's intense hostility toward the USSR as a basic foreign policy tenet.
- China has made no secret of its interest in Western military technology, and Japan and some Western countries seem willing to provide, or consider providing, this technology to Peking.
- The Chinese have received Western and Japanese officials with military or intelligence expertise, including former US Secretary of Defense Schlesinger, former US Chief-of-Staff Zumwalt, ex-CIA Director Bush, high West German military officers, and officials of Japan's military-industrial complex.
- The US has been reassessing its China policy, and articles in US academic journals have advocated a more positive US attitude on providing technology to China.
- The Soviets believe that the post-Mao leaders intend to turn to the West to purchase basic

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technology to build up China's military-industrial base--a belief undoubtedly reinforced by the return of Teng Hsiao-ping, who has been associated with such policies in the past.

-- Soviet Foreign Ministry circles apparently credit the Chinese military with a somewhat higher degree of influence and control in Peking than do our own estimates (as witnessed by the remarks of the chief of the Foreign Ministry's First Far Eastern Department, Kapitsa, to US Embassy officers over the years).

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Soviet actions to date have revealed a genuine uneasiness over the situation coupled with an expansion of efforts to dissuade the West from providing assistance to the Chinese military. Soviet officials have been particularly active in stressing to US visitors and Embassy officials "the real threat" that China poses to the Soviet Union. One of the most direct Soviet statements was made last month by an official of the authoritative CPSU Central Committee theoretical journal *Kommunist*.

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The same sort of message has been repeated to visiting US academics, with emphasis on the necessity for the US to refrain from assisting China's military. These statements, along with the thrust of Soviet propaganda--most notably the article by Aleksandrov in *Pravda* in May and the extensive *Kommunist* polemic in August--have clearly been designed to influence the US decision on providing military-related technology to Peking.

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Moscow's concern is not expressed only to Western audiences. Soviet audiences also read Moscow's propaganda, and the August *Kommunist* article charged that China's military potential is accelerating, citing in particular Peking's nuclear missile weapons. In addition, a lecturer in Leningrad in August clearly conveyed to his Soviet audience the impression of a credible and growing military threat from China. It is likely that the same message has been repeated in lectures elsewhere in the USSR.

The Soviet concern appears to be a combination of prudence and worst case analysis. China has purchased only modest amounts of military-related technology and equipment from the West and has not made a large-scale effort in this direction. Nevertheless, Chinese officials, including Teng Hsiao-ping, have expressed interest to foreigners about acquiring such technology, and these reports undoubtedly reach Soviet ears. Additionally, visits such as that made to France last month by a military delegation headed by Deputy Chief of the PLA General Staff Yang Chen-wu obviously raise Soviet apprehensions.

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